



The Faithful Steward

A Newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America

"We are all called to be faithful and wise stewards, ever waiting for the coming of our Lord." LUKE 12:40-46

The Divine Blade: Martyr-King Oswald of Northumbria (604 – 642AD)

by Maria Vagianos

On a summer night in the northern English countryside, in the year 635, a small band of men from the captive provinces of Northumbria marched into battle against the vast army of Cadwallon, King of the Britons. Though outnumbered by the barbarous horde, the humble forces, led by the Christian King Oswald, overpowered the enemy, "yielding a brilliant victory to the splendid king"¹. Indeed, the miraculous triumph bestowed upon the faithful King Oswald heralded the freedom and unity of his people and the restoration of Christianity to Northumbria.

The Martyr-King Oswald was born about the year 604 in Yeavering, a village in the northern province of Bernicia. A descendant of the royal family of Northumbria, St. Oswald was the second of seven sons of the pagan warrior-king Aethelfrith (592-616) and his wife, Acha. We know of two of his brothers, the elder Eanfrith, and the younger Oswiu. His paternal great-grandfather was Ida (547-559), founder of the Northumbrian royal family, and builder of the royal Bamburgh Castle.²

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At the beginning of the seventh century, the kingdom of Northumbria was formed through the union of two smaller Angle kingdoms of Bernicia

and Deira. From the "Historia Brittonum", we learn that the two kingdoms developed from the settlements conceded by the Britons to Anglo-Saxon mercenaries. Archaeological evidence also supports fifth century Germanic settlements in the Deiran province.³

Early Angle settlers named the territory *Northumbria*, or "land north of the river Humber". At its territorial peak in the seventh century, Northumbria ranged from the River Humber in the south to the River Forth near Edinburgh in present day Scotland.⁴ The southern province of Deira claimed York as its capital, while the northern Bernician province established its capital, Bamburgh (still in present day Northumberland).⁵

From its inception, Northumbria was a pagan land. Yet, for a time, the Christian Faith glimmered under the rule of Martyr-King Edwin, who had converted to Christianity. His death in battle, however, extinguished the Faith in Northumbria, and paganism once again took hold. With the victory of St. Oswald at the Battle of Heavenfield (635), Christianity was renewed.

In 616, King Aethelfrith was slain in a surprise attack by Redwald, King of East Anglia. At that time, Edwin, a beleaguered exile of the Deiran royal line, was under Redwald's

protection. Following the death of the mighty warrior, King Aethelfrith, Edwin acceded to the throne, and assumed control of Northumbria.

Thereupon, Queen Acha (sister of Edwin), and two of her sons, Oswald and Oswiu fled north to safety in the court of King Eochaid Buide⁶ in the Irish kingdom of Dálriada, in western Scotland.⁷ Oswald's elder brother, Eanfrith, fled to Pictland. For the next 17 years, the Queen and her sons would live in exile. The royal family also found spiritual sanctuary with the pious and kindly monks on the isle of Iona. It was in Iona that the exiled young princes received the Mystery of Holy Baptism and instruction in the Christian Faith from the holy fathers of St. Columba's monastery. Thus in this holy place did Oswald spend his youth, guided and prepared by Divine Providence to return to Northumbria and bring the great light of Christianity to his heathen countrymen.

In 633, King Edwin faced the dual onslaught of Cadwallon, King of the Britons, and his ally, Penda, King of the Mercians. The wicked alliance of Penda and Cadwallon overthrew Edwin, and sundered the kingdoms of Bernicia and Deira. In the meantime, Eanfrith (and his cousin, Osric) returned from exile in attempt to govern Bernicia and Deira. Eanfrith and Osric, however, forfeited their Christianity and reverted to paganism. Osric took arms against Cadwallon, and was killed in battle. Eanfrith tried conciliation with the wicked Cadwallon, and was struck down also. Cruel and sanguinary, Cadwallon decimated the Church and nation of the Northumbrians. Professing to be a Christian, the evil Cadwallon scorned the faith of the people, and with ferocity slaughtered men, women, and even young children. So divided and ravaged, Northumbria soon relapsed into paganism.

The Lord did not permit the Northumbrian people to languish under the cruel yoke of Cadwallon. He unsheathed His Divine Blade, St. Oswald, to smite the wicked British king. Descending from the North, Oswald White-blade⁸ "advanced with an army, small, indeed, in number, but strengthened with the faith of Christ...."⁹ Marching south-eastward for 300 miles, with his trusted royal war-band and assisted by Scot and Pictish troops, St. Oswald reached a place called Denisburna, six miles northwest of Hexham, near Hadrian's Wall. Nearby was Heavenfield where Oswald would soon engage in battle with the merciless British king. The Royal Standard of purple, red, and gold was planted; King Oswald and his men encamped in the verdant dales of the Northumbrian countryside to prepare for contest.

On the eve of battle, as St. Oswald lay asleep in his tent, he beheld a vision of St. Columba. His face shining with angelic beauty, the "Dove of the Church" overshadowed the camp, seeming of such height that his head touched the clouds. The holy one's luminous robes covered the entire camp. The saint revealed himself to Oswald, and then spoke

these words of encouragement, as the Lord had spoken to Joshua of old:¹⁰

"Be strong and act manfully. Behold, I will be with thee."

He continued with these holy words:

*"This coming night go out from your camp into battle, for the Lord has granted me that at this time your foes shall be put to flight and Cadwallon your enemy shall be delivered into your hands and you shall return victorious after battle and reign happily."*¹¹

Heeding St. Columba's words, King Oswald awoke, and gathering his soldiers recounted his vision. This miraculous incident encouraged the small army. In the twilight before dawn, the King and his men advanced to meet the enemy. As the Venerable Bede relates, "...Oswald, being about to engage, erected the sign of the holy cross, and on his knees prayed to God that he would assist his worshippers in their great distress."¹² The Holy Cross was hewn of wood and ready to be affixed in a newly dug hole when, like a new Constantine, "...the king himself, full of faith, laid hold of it and held it with both his hands, till it was set fast by throwing in the earth; and this done, raising his voice, he cried to his army, 'Let us all kneel, and jointly beseech the true and living God Almighty, in his mercy, to defend us from the haughty and fierce enemy; for He knows that we have undertaken a just war for the safety of our nation.'"¹³

Our Saviour hearkened unto His faithful servant Oswald, and fulfilled His promise to him. The Power of God manifest within him, the virtuous King Oswald¹⁴ slew the evil Cadwallon on the battlefield, and scattered the disordered Britons. After a long and fierce battle, Cadwallon's brutal reign was brought to an end.

"So King Oswald laid low the barbarian hosts on every side."

Advancing in triumph through the armed battalions of the foe,

*Cutting and trampling, he crushed their fleeting ranks."*¹⁵

Even though St. Oswald's victory at Heavenfield occurred in 635, the Venerable Bede states that "...it has been agreed by all who have written about the reigns of the kings, to abolish the memory of those perfidious monarchs, [the apostasy of the English kings and evil pagan Cadwallon's tyranny] and to assign that year [633] to the reign of...Oswald, a man beloved by God."¹⁶ As the sixth Bretwalda of the English royal line, Oswald was successor to his uncle Edwin in faith and sovereignty. The Venerable Bede tells us that Oswald "brought under his dominion all the nations and provinces of Britain... Through this king's management the provinces of the Deiri and the Bernicians... were peacefully united and moulded into one people."¹⁷

Once enthroned, the first care of this most Christian king of the Northumbrians was to spread the holy Christian

Faith, and help it take root in his kingdom. His thoughts turned to Iona where, as a youth, he had been instructed in the Faith. He beseeched the monks of Iona to send a missionary bishop to “administer the word of faith to him and his nation.”¹⁸ Without delay, Abbot Segenius and the elders of Iona dispatched a priest to preach to the Northumbrians. Having won no converts, however, the priest returned to Iona a short time later, and reported to the council that the people were “uncivilized men, and of a stubborn and barbarous disposition.”¹⁹ Convening a great assembly, the Ionan elders deliberated how to bring the Gospel to these unenlightened peoples. Present at the council was the monk Aidan, who addressed the grave priest thus: “I am of the opinion, brother, that you were more severe to your unlearned hearers than you ought to have been, and did not at first, conformably to the apostolic rule, give them the milk of more easy doctrine, till being by degrees nourished with the word of God, they should be capable of greater perfection, and be able to practise God’s sublimer precepts.”²⁰

Marveling at the God-inspired words of Aidan, the elders concluded that because of his virtuous discretion he should be made bishop and sent to instruct the unbelieving Northumbrian people in the Faith.

When Bishop Aidan arrived, King Oswald greeted him with true Christian and brotherly love. From their youth, the two men had been friends on Iona. As the king’s spiritual adviser and trusted friend, Aidan was granted the isle of Lindisfarne for his Episcopal see. The Venerable Bede describes Lindisfarne (or, Holy Island) as “Which place, as the tide flows and ebbs twice a day, is enclosed by the waves of the sea like an island; and again, twice in the day, when the shore is left dry, becomes contiguous to the land.”²¹

With the coming of Bishop Aidan, the zealous monks of Iona journeyed daily to the kingdoms of St. Oswald to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants. As the Venerable Bede tells us, “those among them who had received priest’s orders administered the Grace of Baptism to the believers. Churches were built in divers places; the people joyfully flocked together to hear the Word; lands and other property were given of the king’s bounty to found monasteries; English children, as well as their elders were instructed by their Scottish teachers in study and the observance of monastic discipline.”²²

In the service of the Church, and with zealous cooperation the saintly King Oswald accompanied Bishop Aidan as

he evangelized throughout the countryside. The King acted as interpreter for St. Aidan who at first could not speak the English language. The Venerable Bede relates one occasion during which Bishop Aidan was at the royal court in Bamburgh: “wherein, when the bishop, who was not skilful in the English tongue, preached the gospel, it was most delightful to see the king himself interpreting the word of God to his commanders and ministers, for he had perfectly learned the language of the Scots during his long banishment.”²³ Thus did King Oswald set a worthy example for his nation, “which he governed being instructed by the teaching of this most reverend prelate.”²⁴

Under the reign of St. Oswald, Northumbria was supreme among the seven Anglo-Saxon kingdoms (the Heptarchy that later merged to become England). His dominion was greater than any of his predecessors; he was overlord of the provinces of Wessex, Sussex, Kent, Lindsey, parts of Mercia, Goddodin, Strathclyde, and perhaps the Picts and Scots of Dálriada.

In his *Life of Saint Oswald*, Reginald of Durham describes St. Oswald as having “arms of great length and power, eyes bright blue, hair yellow, face long and beard thin, and his small lips wearing a kindly smile.”²⁵ King Oswald was married to Cyneburga, daughter of Cyneigils, King of Wessex who had converted to Christianity. His son, Aethelwold later became king (651-654?) and founded through St. Cedd, the monastery of Lastingham in Yorkshire. It is reported that, for many years, St. Oswald even had a pet raven that was his constant companion.²⁶

Even at the height of his power, St. Oswald “was also wont to pray and take more pains for that which is eternal... he often continued in prayer from the hour of morning thanksgiving till it was day; and that by reason of his constant custom of praying or giving thanks to God, he was wont always, wherever he sat, to hold his hands turned up on his knees.”²⁷

During his lifetime, St. Oswald “always continued humble, affable, and generous to the poor and strangers.”²⁸ “[F]or whilst he lived, he never ceased to provide for the poor and infirm, and to bestow alms on them, and assist them.”²⁹ The story of St. Oswald feeding the poor emphasizes his Christian humility and almsgiving:

“When he was once sitting at dinner, on the holy day of [Pascha], with the aforesaid bishop [Aidan], and a silver dish full of dainties before him, and they were just ready to bless the bread, the servant, whom he had appointed to relieve the



poor, came in on a sudden, and told the king, that a great multitude of needy persons from all parts were sitting in the streets begging some alms of the king; he immediately ordered the meat set before him to be carried to the poor, and the dish to be cut in pieces and divided among them. At which sight, the bishop who sat by him, much taken with such an act of piety, laid hold of his right hand, and said, 'May this hand never perish.'³⁰

In 642, King Oswald was again engaged in battle to preserve his Christian kingdom. Word had reached the royal court at Bamburgh that Penda, the pagan king of Mercia, had killed the Christian King Egric of East Anglia and driven the king of Wessex into exile. (Penda had also slain the Christian King Edwin at Hatfield Chase in 633.) Penda continued his relentless advance toward Northumbria. Perceiving the heathen menace, King Oswald assembled his royal army, and marched south to meet Penda on the battlefield.

At the Battle of Maserfield, near present day Oswestry, a few miles from the border of North Wales, King Oswald and his forces clashed with the Mercian army and their Welsh allies in a fierce and bloody struggle. Yet, the weapons and strength of the heathen foe outnumbered the valiant king and his brave army. Overcome by weapons and enemies, and about to perish, King Oswald prayed to God for the souls of his army. "Whence it is proverbially said, 'Lord have mercy on their souls, said Oswald as he fell to the ground.'³¹ St. Oswald was slain on the battlefield in the thirty-eighth year of his age, on the fifth day of the month of August 642.

The victorious pagan King Penda who had slain Martyr-King Oswald commanded the Saint's "head, hands and arms to be cut off from the body, and set upon stakes."³²

The next year, King Oswiu and his host took down the Saint's relics from the poles. He buried the Saint's head at Lindisfarne, and his limbs in the royal city of Bamburgh.

As Bishop Aidan had foretold, St. Oswald's right hand remained incorrupt, and was kept for many years in a silver reliquary at the royal Church in Bamburgh.

"How great his faith was towards God, and how remarkable his devotion, has been made evident by miracles since his death;"³³ relates the Venerable Bede of the many miracles and healings wrought by St. Oswald's relics, and even the very earth where he fell in battle. Bede narrates a number of these miracles in his book. Herein are mentioned a few of the myriad healings and miracles of St. Oswald's intercession:

A short time after St. Oswald's death, a man traveling on horseback was passing through Heavenfield. Of a sudden, the man's horse was fatigued, and stood motionless. Unable to lift his head, the horse began to froth at the mouth, and to suffer increased pain such that he collapsed on the ground. The stunned horseman dismounted and placed straw under his sick steed, wondering if the animal would revive or die. As he rolled on the ground in torment, the horse fell upon the

very spot where King Oswald had died. Immediately, the horse's pain subsided, and recovering, began to graze on the sweet grass. The horseman marveled at the animal's recovery, and determined that the earth in that place was sanctified. The man marked the holy site so that he could recognize it again.

The same man stopped at an inn to stay for the night. There he learned that the host's niece, a young girl, was sick of the palsy. Hearing of her plight, the man informed the girl's relatives of the place where his horse had been cured. The girl was delivered in a cart, and laid on the hallowed ground. Having fallen asleep in that place, she awoke to find herself made whole of her infirmity. The healthy girl asked for water, washed her face, dressed her hair, and returned home on foot with those who had brought her.

News of the holy site at Heavenfield drew people to collect the holy dust from the place where St. Oswald fell. They poured the holy earth into water to which they gave their sick friends to drink. The custom of collecting the holy earth from Heavenfield caused "a hole as deep as the height of a man."³⁴

In 697, Queen Osthrida, daughter of the Saint's brother, Oswiu, translated the venerable bones of her uncle to Bardney (Beardeneu) Abbey in Lincolnshire. At first, the monks refused to accept St. Oswald's relics, though they recognized him as a holy man. Because the Martyr-King was from another kingdom, and had ruled over them, they held a grudge against him. With only a tent to cover them, the holy relics remained with the Queen's caravan overnight outside the monastery. That night, all in the kingdom of Lindsey could see a pillar of light as it shone from the caravan up toward Heaven. Filled with contrition, the monks prayed that St. Oswald's venerable relics might be granted to their care.

The monks cleansed the holy bones of St. Oswald, and placed them in a precious shrine in the monastery's church. The holy water was poured into the sacristy corner. From thence the sacristy, which received the holy water, had the power to heal persons possessed of demons.

The great name of St. Oswald was proclaimed beyond the borders of Britain, "spreading the rays of his healing brightness even beyond the sea, reached also to Germany and Ireland."³⁵ The Venerable Bede also says that Wilbrord, the blessed bishop of Frisia, spoke of the miracles that arose in the Frisian province at the most reverend king's relics.

Following St. Oswald's martyrdom at Maserfield, his holy relics entered the reliquaries of monasteries and churches across Britain.³⁶ For a time, the holy head of St. Oswald was enshrined in Lindisfarne Abbey; later it reposed in the tomb of St. Cuthbert at Lindisfarne. In 1104, St. Cuthbert's relics, along with the blessed head of St. Oswald were translated to Durham Cathedral in the feretory of the Galilee Chapel where they remain to this day.³⁷

Enshrined in silver, the incorrupt right arm of the Saint remained in the Church of St. Oswald in Bamburgh until the monks of Peterborough removed it to a shrine in their abbey. As one of the monastery's most cherished possessions, the holy arm of St. Oswald was later lost or destroyed during the Reformation.³⁸

As mentioned earlier, the monks of Bardney Abbey were the caretakers of St. Oswald's holy body, bequeathed to them by his niece, Queen Osthrida. Draped in the Martyr-King's gold and purple standard, the bejeweled feretory was preserved with care. Abbot Aethelwold saved the Saint's relics from Danish marauders by hiding them in his bedstraw. Later, in 909, Queen Aethelfled of Mercia translated St. Oswald's relics to St. Oswald's Priory in Gloucester.³⁹ Over the centuries, the holy relics of St. Oswald were dispersed to various locations around Britain and abroad.

One of the greatest English sovereigns of his time, the holy Martyr-King Oswald lived as a faithful servant of Christ, excelling in the God-pleasing virtues of humility, prayer, and almsgiving. Though chief in rank and honor in his kingdom, St. Oswald desired only the glory of the Heavenly Kingdom. He was a beloved king who humbly devoted himself to the spiritual and temporal needs of his people. Perfected thus in holy virtue, St. Oswald was bestowed the precious Martyr's crown, to reign in the Heavenly Kingdom with our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

By the holy prayers of the Martyr-King Oswald, O Christ God, have mercy and save us. Amen.

Dismissal Hymn. Third Tone

By the power of the precious Cross, thou didst gain a mighty victory over the heathen foe, O noble sovereign. By thy faith and zeal for piety, thou didst lead thy people unto the truth of Christ, the King of all. O all-famed Oswald, do thou entreat Christ God that we be granted great mercy.

Dismissal Hymn

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Endnotes

¹ <http://www.mun.ca/mst/heroicage/issues/9/ziegler.html>.

² <http://www.dot-domesday.me.uk>, p. 2.

³ <http://www.dot-domesday.me.uk>, p.1.

⁴ <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk>, p. 2.

⁵ <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk>, p. 1.

⁶ <http://www.britannia.com/bios/saints/oswald.html>.

⁷ <http://www.bedesworld.co.uk>, p. 1.

⁸ The epithet "White-blade" comes from the Welsh *Lamnguin*. In Welsh folklore, the color white (guion, gwyn, gwen) has several meanings: pure, sacred, or holy. Saint Oswald's epithet would have applied to the blade of his sword, as

"blade" is stressed in the name. The name "White-blade" would indicate the association of Oswald as the son of Aethelfrith. The symbolic epithet "White-blade" emphasizes its meaning of divine blade, sacred blade, or even blessed blade. As the sword is the ultimate representation of a king's power, a divine sword is symbolic of divine power. Saint Oswald's epithet "White-blade" indicates that God was on Oswald's side against Cadwallon, King of the Britons. <http://www.mun.ca/mst/heroicage/issues/9/ziegler.html>.

⁹ *Bede's Ecclesiastical History*, 1894, p.109.

¹⁰ Adomnán of Iona. *The Life of Saint Columba*, 1995, p.111.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Bede, p.109-110.

¹³ Ibid., p.110.

¹⁴ (Os=God and weald=power). *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, 1956.

¹⁵ <http://www.mun.ca/mst/heroicage/issues/9/ziegler.html>.

¹⁶ Bede, p. 118.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.117.

¹⁹ Mills, Dorothy, *The Middle Ages*, 1935, p. 24-25.

²⁰ Bede, p.117.

²¹ Ibid., p. 112.

²² <http://www.dot.domesday.me.uk>, p.11.

²³ Bede, p. 112.

²⁴ Ibid., p.117.

²⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oswald_of_Northumbria, p. 5.

²⁶ Thomas, William John. et al. *Notes and Queries*, 1850, p. 461.

²⁷ Bede, p. 128.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 118.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 124.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 118.

³¹ Ibid., p. 129.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., pp. 123-124.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 124.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 129.

³⁶ <http://www.britannia.com/bios/saints/oswald.html>, p. 2.

³⁷ http://www.markham.edu.pe/uk2002/uk_day_7.htm

³⁸ <http://www.britannia.com/church/shrines/oswald.html>

³⁹ Ibid.

Photo Credits

p. 1 <http://www.earlybritishkingdoms.com/adversaries/bios/oswald.html>

p. 3 Map of the British Isles, <http://www.maparchives.org>.

Saint Nectarios American Orthodox Cathedral

By Subdeacon Constantine Angelos+ and Fr. Neketas

It was early in 1968 when the new American Orthodox Parish of St. Nectarios was formed in the hall of a Russian Orthodox Church on Seattle's Capitol Hill. The handful of people there were pathfinders, for the new congregation was blazing a trail—the first of several parishes to be established by Orthodox Christians in the United States and Canada against the heresy of ecumenism and the lifting of the anathemas against the Roman Catholic Church by the Patriarch of Constantinople.

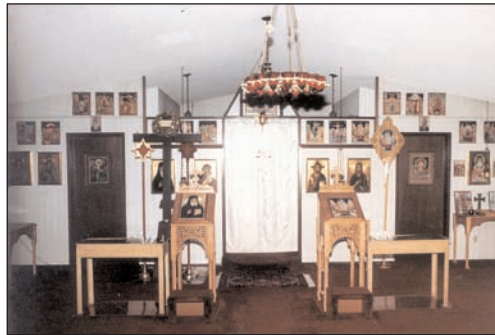
Now, nearly four decades later, it includes a proper church building, an office, a bookstore, social hall, and parking lot in north Seattle, with a congregation of Greek, Ukrainian, Russian and Serbian cradle Orthodox Christians, and members of diverse backgrounds, including converts, all bound by a common faith.

But it was not always so. In the beginning, the parish was homeless, an orphan.

Its voice first was heard on Sunday, January 21, 1968, when the Rev. Neketas S. Palassis startled a hushed congregation at Seattle's new St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church, which he had served for eight-and-a-half years, with this declaration:

“The Orthodox Christian faith is to me of incomparable value. It is not an item to be bartered, debated, and finally compromised on the ecumenical altar of humanistic and anthropocentric love which excludes truth and real divine love. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in His love for us gave

us the Church as ‘the pillar and foundation of truth’ (I Timothy 3:15) ‘not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish’ (Ephesians 5:27). I cannot conceive how it can be offered on the altar of ecumenical dialogue to be dissected and autopsied for the sake of some abstract ‘love.’ Being part of a church which is becoming Roman Catholic in its administration, Protestant in its faith, and Greek Orthodox in its ritual is not for me.”



The original St. Nectarios Church

That tenet has guided Seattle's St. Nectarios parish and others who joined it in protesting ecumenism throughout its spiritual journey to the present.

In January of 1986, Father Neketas petitioned and was accepted under the omophorion of Metropolitan Philaret, who was glorified in 2001 by the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. Under Metropolitan Philaret's stewardship the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR) at the time represented one of the few remaining traditional Orthodox jurisdictions.

That spiritual steadfastness was to change for the Synod when Met-

ropolitan Philaret of blessed memory reposed in November of 1985. With the ascent of Archbishop Vitaly of Montreal to the position of First Hierarch of the ROCOR, a new, more liberal church policy, contrary to Metropolitan Philaret's, was inaugurated and was to lead to a separation from the ROCOR of several monasteries and parishes in the United States, Canada, and France, including St. Nectarios of Seattle. This group protested the reports of nearly 20 concelebrations of ROCOR clergy with ecumenist clergy of the “canonical” jurisdictions. That the Synod repeatedly ignored these ecumenist actions convinced us that Synodal bishops would not reprimand those guilty. The protesting clergy then petitioned two Greek hierarchs, Metropolitan Gabriel and Metropolitan Akakios, who were inactive members of Archbishop Auxentius' Synod, to be received by them. They did accept us in December, 1986. In July, 1987, we chose to go directly under Archbishop Auxentius, since he was the First Hierarch of the Old Calendarist Orthodox Church in Greece. He received us most graciously. The following year in anticipation of our parish's 20th anniversary, Fr. Ephraim of Holy Transfiguration Monastery was ordained to the episcopate as Bishop of Boston.

But that's getting ahead of our story.

About 30 people met in the hall of St. Nicholas Russian Orthodox Church, the Synod's Seattle parish, on February 11, 1968, to form the American Orthodox Church of

Seattle. On March 24, the assembly chose St. Nectarios of Pentapolis, a saint of our century, to be its patron.

And so the parish began, without a roof over its head, without a trained chanter, without a choir, and without hymnals. There was nothing but faith and determination. The members of St. Nicholas allowed the indigent parish to set up a temporary altar table in the nave of the church and to celebrate Sunday Divine Liturgy there. But the St. Nectarios parishioners had to complete their worship before the Russian congregation's services began at midmorning. Although skeptical of the young parish's chances of survival, one of its staunchest advocates was St. Nicholas' aged priest, Mitered Archpriest Andrew Nakonetschny, of blessed memory, who defended the presence of the fledgling parish under his roof against critics. In reality, the parish showed us Abrahamite hospitality. The Danilchik family who live across from the church offered their home for hospitality before and after services. It became our own little coffee shop. We will always remember their kindnesses.

As we approached Great Lent, the struggling parish was allowed to hold its services in the St. Nicholas Hall. A parishioner built a portable plywood icon screen to give the hall the semblance of a church. As it turned out, our altar table was located under the 2nd floor room where St. John of San Francisco had reposed. And once a year we would serve Liturgy in that room which had been converted into a chapel.

The habit of early services took hold. To this day Sunday Orthros

at St. Nectarios begins at 6:50 a.m. and the Divine Liturgy at 8:15 a.m.

The parish adopted English for its liturgical language and follows Greek liturgical customs. However, its bylaws allow any traditional Orthodox language to be used in its services. The problem of no choir was solved by reverting to an older Orthodox tradition—congregational chanting. A group of two or three members with the help of Fr. Neketas translated and mimeographed the music for that first service.

The feeling of "family," of father, mother, and children praying together, has been a hallmark of the parish from its inception. In its early years most of the children were boys. At major feasts the double row of altar boys extended nearly the length of the sanctuary and encircled half the church during processions. The family closeness is enhanced in parish dinners at Pascha, Nativity, the feast of St. Nectarios, and at the annual picnic.

What was especially moving for the parish during its formative years was the fact that we served the Liturgy, whenever Fr. Panteleimon would visit, in the very building where St. John of San Francisco reposed. Not only that, but our altar table was located under the very room in which he reposed. Annually, while Fr. Andrew lived, Fr. Panteleimon and Fr. Neketas would serve in that room which had become a chapel in honor of St. John. After we named our parish, we were informed by a St. Nicholas parishioner that wherever St. John would serve, he would place a small icon of St. Nectarios on the altar table. The saintly Bishop Nektary of Seattle followed our progress with enthusiasm and

support. His last Pascha *Agápe* service was in Seattle where he joyfully gave his blessings to the over 130 parishioners at the service among whom were over 40 children.

If St. Nectarios of Pentapolis is the parish's spiritual patron, his strong right arm on earth, as far as the St. Nectarios congregation is concerned, is the Holy Transfiguration Monastery of Brookline, MA. From its beginning, the parish has been closely aligned with Holy Transfiguration, which has offered counsel and material help. The monastery helped raise funds so the parish could buy its first multilith (offset) printing press, and the Elder, Fr. Panteleimon, has provided icons, votive lamps, relics and other religious items, and enriched parish spiritual life with his sermons and talks, visiting Seattle almost yearly for many years.

It was largely at the prodding and need of St. Nectarios Parish that the then monk, Fr. Ephraim, now our Metropolitan Ephraim, bent to the task of translating and writing the music used by our parishes for their services. Even as Fr. Ephraim visited our parish he always had with him his handy "white-out" solution at the chanters' stand to edit music he had sent us.

The first parish president and chanter, Subdeacon Dr. Andrew Tolas, learned the octoechos by listening to tapes of Fr. Ephraim on his automobile tape deck as he drove from office to hospital and to church.

The most pressing need of the parish was to find a home of its own. That it did in 1971 when it purchased several lots in North Seattle near Interstate-5 and built a

modest 1,360-square foot wooden sanctuary and multipurpose room for \$35,000. The building was a prefabricated structure designed as a house, but adjusted to the church's needs with walls moved to form an icon screen and so on.

That effort and subsequent building projects through the years were largely spearheaded by two unusual people, Peter Charuhas, an electrical engineer, and his wife, Carol (Kalliroi), who had worked for various construction firms. Carol Charuhas was one of those rare, determined people who relished in solving problems, bird-dogging a project through City Hall and finding ways to cut costs.

Since then there have been four expansions, including a domed addition to the nave, a new printing wing, a new office, and finally, in time for the parishes' 20th anniversary in 1988, a new hall and the conversion of a small hall into a printing wing and book store. But Carol Charuhas, who helped plan every detail of the last expansion, was seriously ill and reposed after construction began. The Kalliroi (Carol) Charuhas Memorial Hall was dedicated at the 20th anniversary dinner, September 4, 1988. Early in December of 1992, Peter Charuhas reposed. On the 25th anniversary of the parish, the hall was renamed in their joint memory as the Peter and Carol Charuhas Memorial Hall.

A major remodeling of the kitchen, including new ovens, sinks and plumbing, a refrigerator-freezer, and new cabinets was completed in 1997. The kitchen boasts of artistic ceramic tiles created by Olga Hutchinson. Coffee hours are given every Sunday by parishioners who are observing their feastdays

on that Sunday or coming week. Dorothy Sims coordinates the coffee hours and "puts on the coffee" for the flock. Also, parishioners take turns in cleaning the church every week.

Even as an orphan, the parish was a parish with a mission, for if its buckler was the Faith, its sword was the printing press. The first copy of the *Orthodox Christian Witness* (OCW), printed on an old mimeograph machine in Fr. Neke-tas' basement, was published March 18/31, 1968. More than 1,500 issues, sent to the four corners of the earth, have appeared since then. The OCW reached round the world and was circulated in over 40 states and 38 foreign countries. Its articles were translated into Greek, French, Russian, Ukrainian, Spanish, and German. It was viewed as a touchstone of Orthodoxy. *The Witness* was followed by the *St. Nectarios Educational Series* which consisted of over 94 articles on various aspects of the faith, ecumenism, moral issues, and articles of theological or canonical content. Hundreds of thousands of copies of the various educational series articles were distributed by the church. The OCW and the educational series were eagerly read by friends, as well as by those who disagreed with our positions.

Parish coffee hours after Divine Liturgy often turned into parish work parties to assemble, staple, and address publications. In 1973 the women of the parish gathered their own Lenten recipes and researched others to help produce *A Lenten Cookbook for Orthodox Christians*, followed by *Lenten Favorites*, two cookbooks designed to help those who wished to keep

the holy fasts. More than 25,000 copies of the two popular Lenten-food aids have been printed.

In 1977 St. Nectarios Press was created to publish books and pamphlets in English, beginning with *The Way of the Ascetics* and *The Paradise of the Fathers*. Since then more than 40 titles have been printed and made available to English-speaking Orthodox Christians throughout the world. The parish bookstore not only markets its own publications and the various publications of other Orthodox publishers, but also sells votive lamps, icons, crosses, crowns for weddings and taped compact-disc recordings of church hymns, services and talks of the speakers at the annual Orthodox Conferences.

The collating of the Press' Orthodox Calendar was a joyful parish activity in late November and early December of each year. It represented an annual opportunity to recall "those thrilling days of yesteryear" when parishioners did all the Press' work.

The Press has published heavily-sought-after spiritual children's books. Among its children's publications are full color editions of *The Life of St. Nectarios*, as well as *The Life of St. Nicholas*, and in collaboration with the Holy Nativity Convent prepared a *Pilgrim's Guide to the Holy Land*, which was published in 1998. Interestingly, while the parish is in the far Pacific Northwest corner of the United States, a substantial number of its members have earned the title of "Pilgrim," by participating in the annual pilgrimage to the Holy Land led by the Elder Panteleimon of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

In 1976 Fr. Neketas gained an

assistant when Fr. Ihnat Ponomarchuk was ordained a deacon. On Sunday, July 22, 1990, Fr. Ihnat was elevated to the priesthood, giving the parish a second spiritual father to minister to a wide-ranging flock, for St. Nectarios served a vast area from Vancouver, BC, to Eastern Washington, to its Nativity of Christ mission parish in Portland, Oregon. A year later in June, the parish produced its second active priest for our diocese when Deacon Constantine Parr was ordained a priest. Both Fathers Nektas and Ihnat helped train Fr. Constantine liturgically. Fr. Constantine was assigned to minister to the Prophet Elias Mission in the Bellingham area, north of Seattle and near the Canadian border, but in 1996 a secular job change transferred Fr. Constantine to Portland, where he took over the spiritual guidance of the renamed Holy Nativity of the Theotokos parish there.

While originally founded by faithful of Greek-Slavic backgrounds, St. Nectarios Parish has increasingly become a “Catholic” community—i.e., including people of all ethnic roots and backgrounds. The parish now counts about 140 members representing about 70 households. From these ranks have come four subdeacons and a dozen tonsured readers. The parish presently has an additional 29 members in Eastern Washington, Vancouver, BC, Vancouver, Washington, Eastern Oregon, Hawaii, and California. Another parishioner, Elizabeth Eaton, lives and teaches in Germany but we do see her once a year during family visits to Seattle.

Five St. Nectarios parishioners

have joined the monastic ranks—Rodion Clinkingbeard is Fr. Nicholas and Dietrich Villbrandt, Fr. Boniface at Holy Transfiguration Monastery; and Dorothy Vagin is Mother Elizabeth at Holy Nativity Convent, also in Brookline, MA. Two, Mother Nectaria and Mother Xenia, were tonsured toward the end of their lives.

Being aware of the fact that the faith must be practiced, as well as proclaimed, the St. Nectarios Benevolent Fund was established early in 1976. It is the philanthropic outreach of the parish and has continued to grow. The fund actively supports missions, orphans and needy institutions and organizations. It contributes to the difficult work of carrying out philanthropic work



George Angelos serving eggs at the Sunday School fundraiser

among Orthodox Christians in the United States, Canada, Europe, Central America, Africa, and the Near East. The fund is supported by donations and profits from the sale of books, crosses and icons from the St. Nectarios Book Center. Over \$1,000,000 in aid has been distributed through the fund in the three decades since it was established.

Two months after Mount St. Helens, 150 miles to the south, made history by blowing its vol-

canic top in 1980, St. Nectarios made history by sponsoring the First Annual Orthodox Conference in Seattle. The parish also hosted the 1985 and the 1990 conferences. In May of 1995 the parish sponsored a three-day mini-conference in which Bishop Makarios of Toronto and Bishop Ephraim of Boston participated. In 1999, the Convent of the Meeting of the Lord was established in Stanwood, Washington. Mother Thecla was appointed the Abbess and she is now assisted by Mother Mary, Mother Eudokia and Novice Mariam. The convent produces beeswax votive candles for sale to parishioners and to the many customers from Stanwood. The Stanwood community has literally adopted the convent as its own. Several newspaper articles have featured the convent. Fr. Ihnat serves at the convent on a regular basis thus providing spiritual nourishment for the community and Fr. Panteleimon, as the overseer of HOCNA's monastic communities visits it annually.

In the late 1990's, iconographer Andrij Maday, a gifted artist, was brought to the parish to create a plan for iconographically embellishing the church. He came, he saw, and he left with a wonderful plan of creating “a jewel” of a church. Already, he has painted for the church: the Annunciation, the 12 Apostles, the Pantokrator, six Old Testament prophets in the dome, and the four Evangelists at the base of the dome. An additional fourteen saints in medallion settings have been painted above the right and left choirs. We look forward with much joy to Andrij's masterful completion of the church's iconography.

As Fr. Panteleimon said, we have the rest of our lives to see the continuance and, hopefully, the completion of this work.

The 7-member parish council under the leadership of Subdeacon Leonid Ponomarchuk has overseen the beautification of both the inside and outside of the church structure, the landscaping and grounds maintenance, the reroofing of the church, the restructuring of the accounting system, financial planning for the parish, the organization of the parish meals after the major feasts of the church, and providing assistance to any other project asked of them by the clergy.

The 21st century saw an important event in the parish life which was the appointment of Metropolitan Moses to head the newly-established Metropolis of Seattle. Metropolitan Moses was warmly and joyously received by the parish.

In 2003, a mini-conference was sponsored by the parish. Speakers included the Very Rev. Sergios, Fr. Simon, iconographer of the St. Gregory of Sinai Monastery, and Fr. Nicodemos Gayle of the St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church in Glen Allen, VA. Parishioners were enthralled by the speakers and the slide presentation of Fr. Simon.

In 2004, the parish was honored and delighted to have the consecration of the Very Rev. Sergios Black to the episcopate. Fr. Sergios was and is the Abbot of the Monastery of St. Gregory of Sinai in Kelseyville, California. He was given the title Bishop of Loch

Lomond in Northern California. He has been the valuable assistant and capable advisor to Metropolitan Moses.

During Metropolitan Moses' tenure, the wish of Metropolitan Ephraim was fulfilled that St. Nectarios develop a left and right choir, thus carrying out the ancient tradition of antiphonal chanting in the church. The choir led by Ruth Wolfe consists of over 15 members who enhance the worship of the church.



Silent Night being signed for Dimitri Angelos (lower left) who is deaf

In March of 2007, by a decision of the Holy Synod, His Eminence's administration was transferred from Seattle to Portland, Oregon, and the diocese was renamed Metropolis of Portland. As is the practice, the parish still retains the title of cathedral and the parish has been designated as a *Stavropegiaki enoria* (parish) under the omophorion of the Metropolitan of Boston.

The parish has a very active Sunday School program headed by an enthused and hard-working Athena Diafos, assisted by very dedicated parents who rotate presentations to the youth on a weekly basis. The children benefit from a

Summer School program in July and a special Saint Nicholas Day celebration in December. On June 3 the Sunday School children, assisted by their parents, sponsored a coffee hour for the African orphans. \$2,000.00 was raised by the children for the orphans. Nearly 10 youths from the parish will attend the St. Xenia Camp this year.

Now after four decades, the second generation is picking up where their fathers and mothers left off. The younger members are participating in the Parish Council, helping to maintain the church, tithing, attending vigils, sharing in the liturgical work, and continuing the traditions handed down to us from generation to generation. Leonid Ponomarchuk and David Nichols are stepping up to the chanters' stands to assist and learn from Dr. Tolas.

We thank everyone who has supported St. Nectarios Cathedral through prayers and monetary contributions and we now make a plea for prayers for Francesca-Ioanna, a 2½ year-old parishioner who is suffering from Tuberosus Sclerosis, a disease which has no cure. Please remember her and her parents James and Nicole Schmidt in your prayers.

Subdeacon and pilgrim, Constantine Angelos, a founding member of the parish, and a retired reporter for The Seattle Times, who edited the Orthodox Christian Witness, as well as other occasional informative publications of the parish, reposed in 2006. Mr. Angelos also served as the assistant to Dr. Tolas at the chanters' stand. The introductory portions of this article were written by him for The True Vine. May his memory be eternal!

THE ELDER IERONYMOS OF AEGINA

By Peter Botsis



Translated from the Greek by the
HOLY TRANSFIGURATION MONASTERY
Boston, Massachusetts
2007

A New Publication

The Life of the Elder Ieronymos of Aegina
1883–1966

Father Ieronymos the Cappadocian, the renowned Elder of the isle of Aegina in Greece, was an exceedingly compassionate healer of souls, a clairvoyant Father-confessor who saw the secret thoughts hidden in the heart, and a man of unceasing prayer who attained to the heights of the vision of God.

Those who came to know him exclaimed that they had met another Saint Isaac the Syrian.

His complete life is now available in English for the first time, written by those who knew him personally.



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An Excerpt Showing the Elder's Clairvoyance

Once an elderly couple visited the Elder. They had no children of their own, but had an adopted daughter who tormented them, treating them very harshly. As soon as they heard of the Elder Ieronymos, they went to visit him to express their pain to him. He said to them reproachfully, “She has done very little to you. She ought to have broken your head.” As they sat in shocked disbelief at his answer, after a moment’s silence he explained to them that when God had given them their own child, they didn’t want it and they killed it, and that it wasn’t the fault of this girl, but it was their own sin that was tormenting them. At this revelation they melted in tears and with contrition confessed to him what they had done. Then, with paternal love

and saintly discretion, he comforted and counselled them, promising to pray that God would change their daughter for the better. They left relieved and full of joy. Upon their return home, they expected to be met by the usual grim looks, shouts, and so forth, but were astonished to find their daughter transformed, kind and meek, and telling them she regretted that they were unable to live in peace, and that she was going to try to change her ways. They understood that this was a miracle worked by the Elder’s prayer.

The Elder Ieronymos of Aegina, p. 361.
© 2007, Holy Transfiguration Monastery,
Brookline, MA

A New Deacon for a New Cathedral

On Lazarus Saturday, March 18/31 2007, George V. Psaromatis, subdeacon, was ordained to the Diaconate at The Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Orthodox Cathedral in Portland OR. This was a special occasion as it was the Portland parish's first Hierarchical liturgy as a cathedral.

Father George, the son of Vasilios and Margaret Psaromatis, was born on the feast of St. George (April 23/May 6) in 1980 in Athens, Greece. He is the sixth child out of nine and has five brothers and three sisters. Fr. George's grandparents, Panayotis and Maria Psaromatis, were among the few in Greece that remained with the traditional "Old Calendar" and have never veered off the straight and narrow path of Orthodox Christianity. In 1983, his family moved to upstate New York, where the nearest Orthodox Church was a good four-hour drive. Even though there was no Church where they lived, God provided. Both his parents and older siblings made sure that our Saviour remained an active part of the family's day-to-day life. The children were taught to say their prayers and make the sign of the cross when arising from sleep, before and after meals, and also when going to bed. Before going to sleep, the older children would ask the younger ones, "Did you do your cross on your pillow?" In this fashion, the children obtained an invaluable spiritual weapon, a prayer rule. Most of the spiritual material in the household was in Greek. Since the older children were able to read Greek, they would read the lives of the saints and then explain the saint's lives to the younger ones in English. His father taught him that no matter where he found himself, he could always pray to our Saviour for guidance and protection.

In the late 80's, his family moved to Maryland, and after some searching, began to attend services at St. Cosmas of Aitolia Orthodox Church. Fr. George's eldest sister, Maria, (now Maria Fotopoulos, editor of the St. Cosmas *Ladybug*) would hold an informal church school for her younger siblings every Sunday after church. His brother Mike would teach them the lives of the saints and why fasting was so important for an Orthodox Christian.

In his high school years, Fr. George visited the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in Boston. Through listening to talks and experiences of the elders, and becoming acquainted with many of the fathers there, he became attracted to monasticism. He started to read more

about Orthodox monasticism and continued to visit the monastery frequently. In October of 1999, Fr. George visited the Holy Land. He, like so many other pilgrims who visit Jerusalem, was changed for the rest of his life. He saw and walked in places where our Saviour walked and had experiences beyond words. The most dramatic thing that happened that would change his life forever, was meeting his future wife, Mary Fagan (now Diaconisa Mary). For two years, Fr. George struggled with the decision of whether to become a novice or to get married. After much thought and prayer, he decided on the latter and asked Mary for her hand in marriage. In August of 2002, they were married at the Cathedral of St. Mark of Ephesus in Boston MA.

Since his wife was completing her schooling there, they moved to Portland, OR. Both he and his wife have become very active in the church community of Holy Nativity of the Theotokos. Father George has helped with chanting since his arrival and in 2004 he was tonsured a reader. He has also taught the grade-school level Sunday school for four years. His wife, Diaconisa Mary, has also helped lead the left choir, and has taught the high school and college level Sunday school for five years at the Portland Cathedral.

Fr. George was approached in 2004 concerning becoming a deacon, but decided to wait to become more settled. He was ordained a subdeacon in 2005. In 2007, The Holy Nativity of the Theotokos Orthodox Church was blessed to become a cathedral. With this blessing came many responsibilities. When Fr. George and Diaconisa Mary saw their hierarch, Metropolitan Moses, trying to administer to the needs of his far-flung diocese in Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Utah, California, and Arizona, they knew that the time had come to accept the call of their hierarch.

Our long suffering Saviour has blessed Fr. George with loving parents, an orthodox upbringing, a patient and loving wife, two beautiful children (another one on the way), and many other blessings. When a person is baptized into the body of Christ, he enters into our Saviour's army and wages war against the evil one. Some are called to the front. May the Theotokos strengthen and support Fr. George and all our deacons, priests, and especially our holy hierarchs, the icons of Christ, for they are all struggling at the front lines of this war.

Glory be to God for all things!

Axios!



Metropolitan Moses with clergy, servers, and the immediate family of Deacon George Psaromatis



*Metropolitan Makarios and Hierodeacon Menas
who was tonsured and ordained on April 23/May 6, 2007*

A Miracle of St. Seraphim in the Republic of Georgia

In 2001, a certain person came to our Dormition of the Mother of God Church in Tbilisi, Georgia. His wife, together with her mother, attended a parish of the Georgian Patriarchate and they were even acquainted with a bishop of the official church. This person started coming to our church frequently. He began to read the books published by our fathers in Georgia about the involvement of the Georgian Patriarchate in the heresy of ecumenism and he also gave them to his wife to read. After a while, they both felt it necessary to talk with their bishop concerning these matters. They were not very happy with the outcome of the talk and were not convinced by his arguments. Still, they could not make the final decision to abandon the official church.

One Sunday, before the Divine Liturgy, Fr. Zurab noticed that this person was examining one particular icon very attentively. It was the icon of St. Seraphim of Sarov. Fr. Zurab approached him and asked what was the matter. The man asked who this Saint was, and Fr. Zurab



answered that it was St. Seraphim of Sarov, a great wonderworking father. Then this person said the following:

“Last night in my sleep I had a dream. On one side I saw a croud of people that was starting to walk on a road, and the road was quite wide. I could not recognize anyone in that multitude. On the other side I saw a few people who were about to start walking on a different road, but their road was very rough. In them I could recognize faces of people that I see here, in this church. Suddenly I saw a man in front of me who said, ‘Walk this way,’ and was pointing to the road where all of you were. The man that I saw in my dream is the Saint on this icon!”

It is noteworthy that as this person had only recently started to attend this church, he had not heard about St. Seraphim. After receiving such clear instruction from our Holy Father Seraphim, he, together with his family, abandoned the Georgian Patriarchate and joined our Church.

Through the prayers of our Godbearing Father Seraphim of Sarov, Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us and save us!

Addendum to the Metropolis of Toronto

SS. Peter and Paul Orthodox Mission
Ispas
P.O. Box 57
Two Hills, Alberta T0B 4K0
Rector: Presbyter Bohdan Borody

Addendum to the Life of Yiannis Avdicos, 1938–2006

By Mother Macaria

In 2006, The Most Holy Mother of God, Keeper of the Portal, Orthodox Church in Calgary, Alberta had no priest to serve for Holy Week or Pascha. The parishioners, however, carried on with the church services as well as they could.

For Palm Sunday Yiannis Avdicos continued his annual tradition of making Palm Crosses as he had learned in his youth from his mother. He would make enough crosses so that each parishioner could take one and might remember the meaning of Palm Sunday, even though the crosses were not formally blessed. This time there was a surplus of crosses which Yiannis' wife, Sevasti, stored in a basket in the church sanctuary.

Four months after Yiannis' repose, it was time for Palm Sunday again. Only this year Metropolitan Makarios of Toronto sent Fr. David Belden to serve the parish, and me to assist in chanting. 2007 was one of

the years in which the Orthodox Paschal season coincides with the Western Easter celebrations. As a Lenten temptation, there was a mixup in the parishes' order to the florist, and neither palms nor pussywillows could be procured throughout snowy Calgary that day, either through wholesalers or in retail shops. What to do?



Sevasti produced the basket of palm crosses made by Yiannis the previous year. Fr. David blessed them and was then able to distribute real palm crosses on Palm Sunday. Yiannis' love for keeping the Church traditions he had learned in his youth, provided us with what was needed in order that we on

earth could celebrate with the Church Victorious in oneness of spirit on the Feast of our Lord's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Hosana in the highest; blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord!

publications

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Start your Nativity or Name days shopping TODAY with publications from HOMB. Learn what Scripture, the Saints and our Holy Fathers have to say on various subjects found in back issues of *The True Vine*, 47 pamphlets and select books for your reading pleasure. Please contact us and ask for a FREE publications list. We have several ways for you to contact us at your convenience.

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2008 HOCNA Church Wall Calendars

On Sale Now!

The Holy Orthodox Metropolis of Boston will be printing the 2008 church wall calendar that St. Nectarios Press printed in the past. Orders are now being accepted for next year's calendar at a cost of \$8.00 plus S/H. Note: Discounts are available. Included with the calendar at no extra charge is a booklet containing the daily Epistle and Gospel readings. We anticipate distribution in October 2007. This will make a great Nativity gift for family and friends. Contact us at (617) 323-6379 or email us at vik kif@homb.org



About Our Logo *A Divine Confirmation*

The cross on our masthead commemorates the miraculous appearance of the sign of the Cross near Athens on Sept. 14 (according to the traditional Orthodox calendar) in 1925. Anti-Orthodox and secularist forces in power in Greece, together with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, had forced the changing of the traditional church calendar in 1924 as a first step toward uniting with the heterodox churches of the West. Shining in the evening sky on the traditional feast day of the Exaltation of the Cross, this extraordinary appearance of the Cross is a divine confirmation of Holy Tradition in the Orthodox Church and of the calendar as one facet of Holy Tradition.

The Faithful Steward is the official newsletter of the Holy Orthodox Church in North America. Under the editorship of Metropolitan Ephraim of Boston, *The Faithful Steward* appears three times yearly, and is delivered free of charge to the faithful of the Holy Metropolis of Boston. For others, a donation of \$1.50 an issue is requested.

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THE DIOCESE NEEDS SUPPORT

“Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17). The perfect gift is the one that only membership in the Church can give: the knowledge of true worship and the grace of the Holy Mysteries. But our era suffers from a famine of truth and the true worship of God. In our weak way, we try to feed those who hunger for God. Your prayers and your donations help the Church in this awe-inspiring ministry. Another way to help is to make a bequest to the Church in your will. Remember that God loves a cheerful giver. Also remember that *The Faithful Steward*, although delivered free of charge to all members of our Metropolis, is in need of your support.

